

AGENDA

Advisory Group on the CHRO, Diversity Law and Affirmative Action in State Agencies

August 6, 2008, 2:00 pm, Room 410, The Capitol

1. Review of Minutes of June 25 meeting
2. Affirmative Action policies and procedures subgroup recommendations
3. Diversity law and policy subgroup recommendations
4. CHRO operations subgroup draft recommendations
5. Next meeting

**Advisory Group on the CHRO, Diversity Law &
Affirmative Action in State Agencies**
MEETING MINUTES
for the June 25, 2008 Meeting

PRESENT: Debi Freund, Dawne Westbrook, David Metzger, Barbara Collins,
Alice Pritchard, Stacy Walsh, Julie Evan Starr, Glenn A. Cassis,
Sen. Eric Coleman, Teresa Younger, Fernando Betancourt

STAFF: Adam Jeamel (Governor's Office)

GUESTS: Robert Brothers, Jr., Jim O'Neill

I. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Minutes reviewed and approved with no changes.

II. CHRO OPERATIONS SUBGROUP:

Based on comments from CHRO employees, staff, commissioners; practitioners who regularly appear before the CHRO; legislators and Advisory Group members, the CHRO Operations Subcommittee made a number of recommendations aimed at creating a CHRO that has an effective and qualified leader with authority to make decisions, deal with personnel issues, craft agency policy and agendas and be the public face of the agency. Some of the subcommittee's recommendations include some of the following:

- Eliminating 9 unpaid volunteer commissioners and replacing them with a single paid commissioner who is appointed by the Governor and three Deputy Commissioners for field operations/investigations, affirmative action and contract compliance and Counsel/Managing Director. They also recommend creating a Connecticut Advisory Council on Civil Rights – made up of nine members who would provide guidance and advice to the CHRO Commissioner and the Governor.
- Look into the effect on CHRO of pending legislation that would create a division of Administrative Law Judges and amending CHRO regulations to address withdrawal of complaints and release of jurisdiction letter after 150 days have passed since the charge was filed.
- Instituting more training for investigators and creating more user-friendly procedures for filing charges of discrimination.

The proposal outlined by the CHRO Operations Subcommittee generated considerable discussion among Advisory Group members and representatives of the CHRO. The Subcommittee explained how their proposal takes into account the feedback from the

current commissioners and others and said this may not be the best model but the model in place is not working effectively.

Bob Brothers said some of the recommendations have merit and deserve consideration. He said there are a number of things that are “broken” and a number of things that needed to be “fixed”. The CHRO’s current set up prohibits certain things from getting done.

Questions raised during the meeting include how can you make the commissioners more autonomous? Why don’t we find appointing authorities others than politicians for things like CHRO and Ethics? What do other states do for commissioners? Are any other states making greater progress than Connecticut when it comes to boards and commissions appointments?

After further discussion, in addition to not enough effective management practices and accountability issues, there is an autonomy issue too.

The Advisory Group also raised the idea of having a vetting process – similar to Judicial Selection – to forward recommendations to the Governor for an appointment of CHRO Commissioners with staggered the terms.

As the Subcommittee detailed the other recommendations, the Chairperson of the CHRO Advisory Group and other members of the Advisory Group weighed-in on the feasibility and the support that might be out there for their recommendations.

It was decided that the Subcommittee would meet again to discuss some of the ideas raised during the June meeting, particularly stressing “independence” but holding people accountable.

The Advisory Group will take a consensus on the CHRO Operations Subcommittee recommendations at the July meeting (postponed to August) and begin to address the proposals that will be unveiled by the other two subcommittees at the same meeting.

III. NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, July 9, 2008 from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm (POSTPONED)

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 6, 2008 at 2:00 pm in Room 410 of the State Capitol.